Putting the Community in Learning Communities

Gen Ed PD-O-Rama

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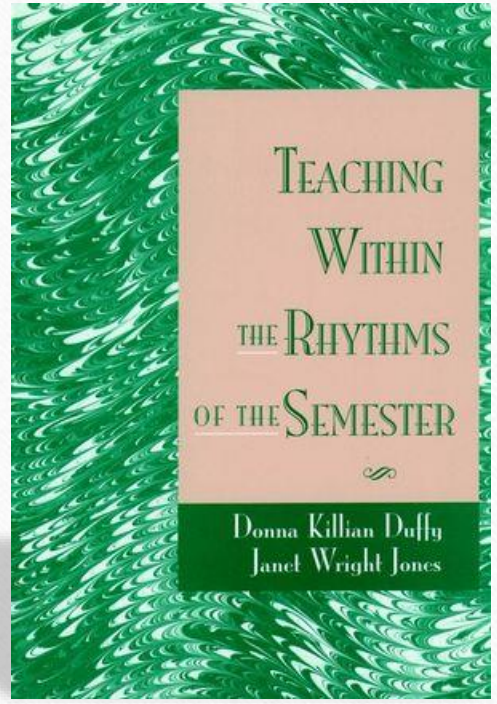
From a community of learners to a learning community

- Class A
  - Faculty
  - Students
- Class B
  - Faculty
  - Students
- Class C
  - Faculty
  - Students

Community

Learn

Why?



- Because "…the classroom is the most logical, most visible, most ubiquitous, and most neglected place for community on campus."
  - *Duffy, D.K. and Jones, J.W.. 1995. Teaching within the Rhythms of the Semester. Jossey-Bass, p. 126.*

Building community

- What is community?
- Why does it matter?
- How do we link neighborhoods (the separate classes) to a cohesive community (the LC?)
- What does "community" require?
- What's absent and what can we add or change to establish community?

What does community require, & from whom?

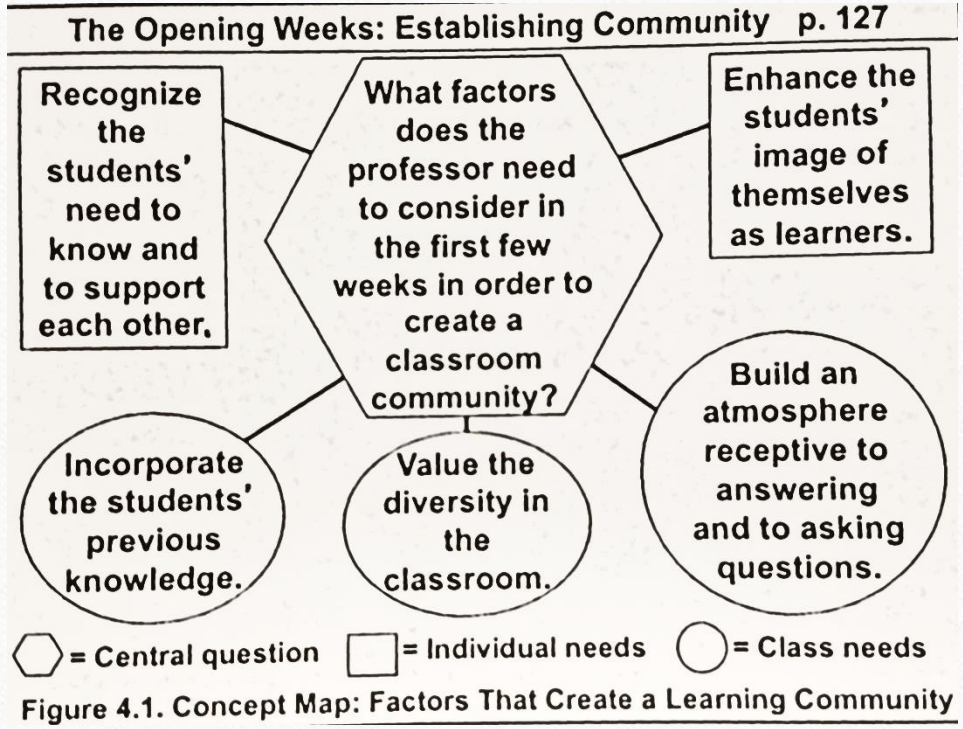
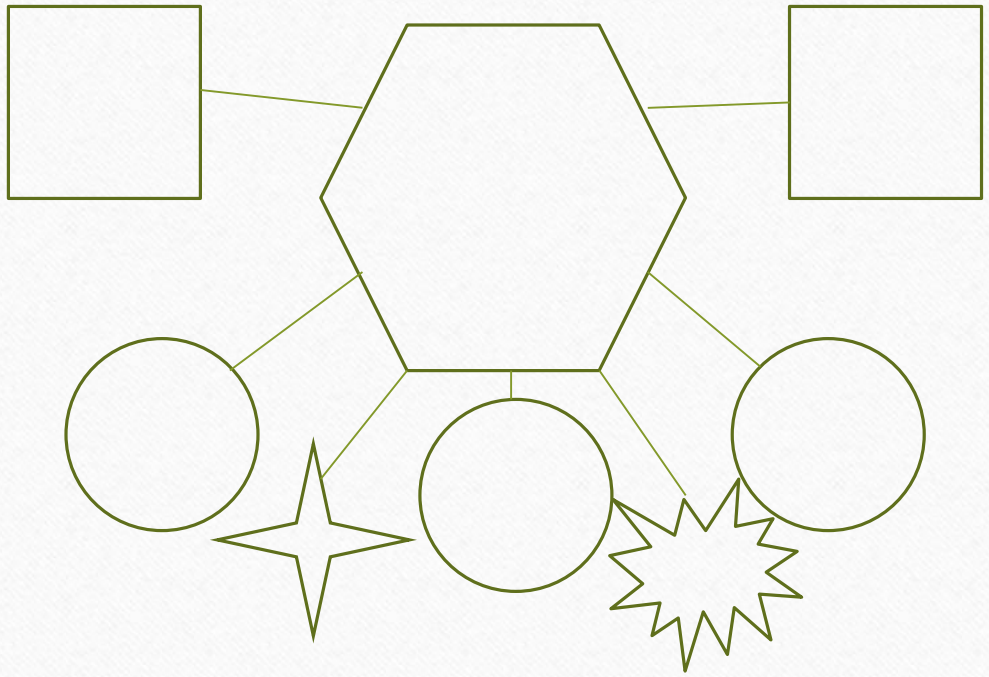
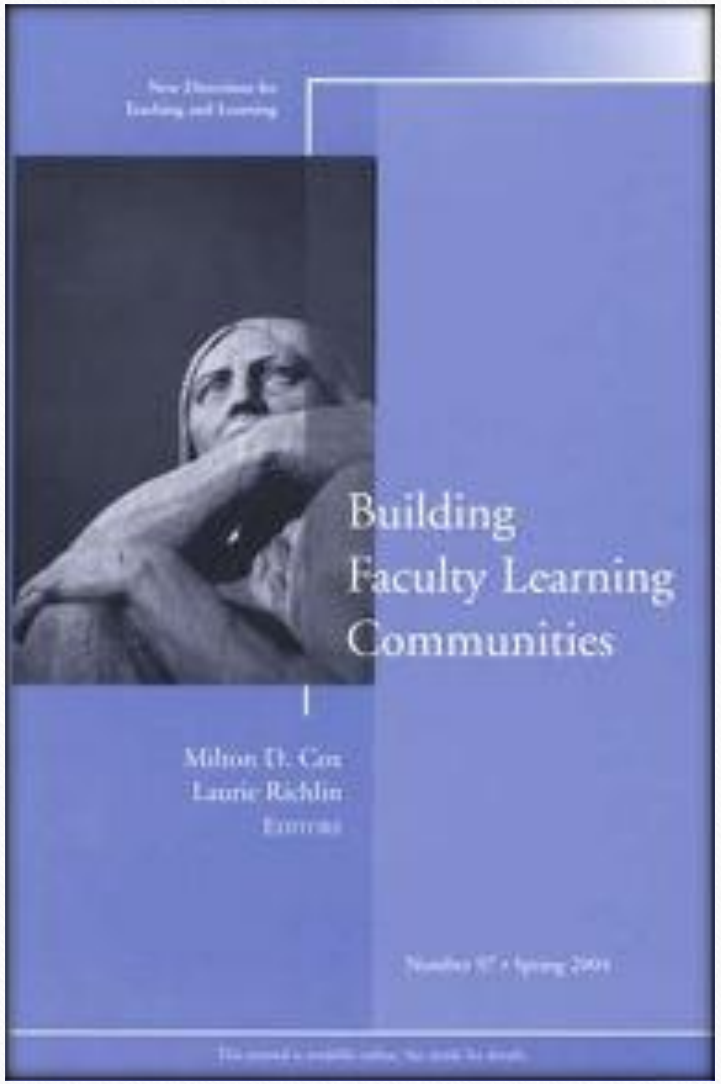
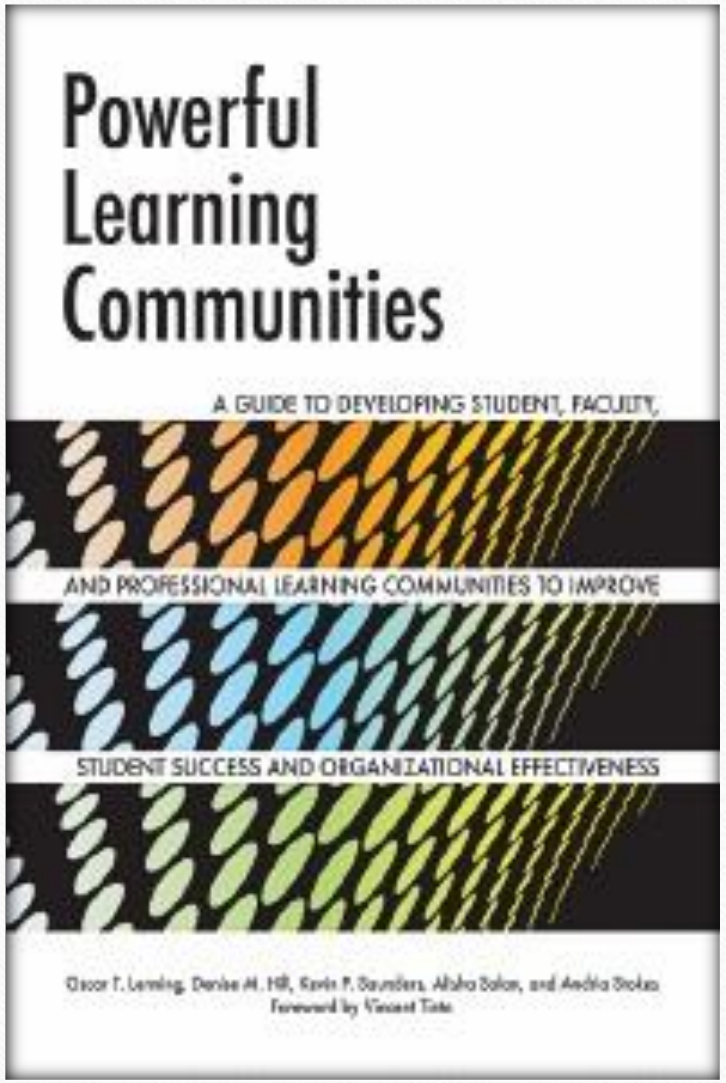


Figure 4.1. Concept Map: Factors That Create a Learning Community

From *Rhythms*, as cited by Cox, 2017




Building
Faculty Learning
Communities


Powerful
Learning
Communities
A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING STUDENT, FACULTY,
AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE
STUDENT SUCCESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Adapted, with permission, from Milt Cox, 2017

- Four days ago, Milt tried to apply what he has spent years studying and about FLCs to CLCs (Course Learning Communities).
- For the record, he is the author of that blue book up there and the Editor in Chief of *Learning Communities Journal* and the *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching*.
- He shared some ideas on merging these two areas of expertise…

~~Faculty~~ Student Learning and Development Changes

Top 5 impacts ~~on themselves~~ that ~~faculty~~ students reported…

1. Perspective on ~~teaching and~~ learning and other aspects of higher education beyond their own ~~discipline~~ major.
2. Interest in the ~~teaching~~ learning process.
3. Understanding of and interest in ~~SoTL~~ scholarship/critical thinking.
4. View of ~~teaching~~ learning as an intellectual pursuit.
5. Comfort level as a member of the university community.

Further…

- **Learning communities** are transdisciplinary groups of people assembled around common goals and interests who learn, develop, and share ideas relevant to a specific topic through a process of collaborative inquiry. A key to success is intentionality. As McGill and Beaty famously noted in 2001: successful learning communities involve "…*a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done*."
- Learning communities **value the enrichment of the self and the group**.
- Often, the emphasis is less on rules and a final destination than it is on the growth of ideas and identities along the way.
  - They "get things done", but with a higher degree of personal and professional enrichment.

Learning communities checklist

- ✓ Articulate goals
  - ✓ *For the class and the LC, noting the interconnections*
- ✓ Align them with overarching structures
  - ✓ *Gen Ed objectives, LC objectives –the "why"*
- ✓ Figure out ways of assessing if you've accomplished them
  - ✓ *For the class and the LC. What's your evidence of community?*
- ✓ Balance/integrate class and LC interests, topics, and strategies of inquiry
- ✓ Cultivate a meaningful social presence among members
- ✓ Optimize time and technology
- ✓ Stay engaged with one another and with content
- ✓ Be inclusive

- Goals?
- Alignment?
- Assessment?
- Balance/integration?
- Social Presence?
- Time and Technology?
- Engagement at Multiple Levels?
- Inclusive?